

**THE WEINBERGER “DOCTRINE”:
USEFUL COMPASS OR FLAWED CHECKLIST?**

BY

MAJOR JOHN S. SELLERS

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About the Author

Major John Sellers was commissioned through the Officer Training School in 1987. Graduating from Undergraduate Pilot Training in 1988, he flew the F-15C until 1999. Major Sellers is a Senior Pilot with over 2,500 flying hours. He has a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree in Military Operational Art and Science from Air Command and Staff College. In July 2001, Major Sellers was assigned to the Air Force Doctrine Center.

Abstract

In 1986, Caspar Weinberger gave a speech to the National Press Corps in which he proposed six tests for American leaders to consider before making the decision to use military force. His intent was to urge caution and restraint before committing troops. This paper evaluates the strategic utility of the “Weinberger Doctrine” by examining classical theorists and historical evidence.

The author lists the six tests along with contemporary criticism to show that the criteria debuted to mixed reviews. The writer then examines the tests through the lens of three diverse theorists: Thucydides – a fifth-century B.C. historian; Carl Von Clausewitz – a nineteenth-century military theorist; and Graham Allison – a contemporary political scientist. The central conclusion is that one should not ask, as Weinberger does, whether force should be employed before one evaluates possible strategies. Next, the writer examines three varied cases: the American decisions to use force in Vietnam and Allied Force, and the German decision preceding the First World War. The cases confirm the finding of the theorists that one should evaluate strategy before deciding to use military force. They also show that Weinberger should have included a test causing leaders to consider the long-term implications of military action.

The main conclusion is that Weinberger’s tests, while covering most of the relevant subjects concerning the decision to use force, are not organized in a useful manner. Essentially, the Wienberger tests consider each element of strategy separately and cause the leader to consider the national importance of the situation and the strength of his commitment to act. Weinberger could have urged far more restraint by causing leaders to consider whether the separate elements fit together into a feasible strategy. Weinberger’s failure to require leaders to consider the strategic feasibility of military action neglects what is perhaps the most important constraint regarding the wise use of force. A secondary conclusion is that leaders must consider the long-term implications of any use of force. This is especially important in a limited war where a greatly restrained

use of military force might not achieve the national policy objective. Failure to consider such questions can lead to prolonged, unpopular conflict.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
DISCLAIMER	ii
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
THE WEINBERGER TESTS.....	4
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES.....	15
CASE STUDIES.....	39
CONCLUSIONS.....	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	70

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In a speech before the National Press Club in 1984, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger answered what he considered to be the most important question concerning keeping the peace. "Under what circumstances, and by what means, does a great democracy such as ours reach the painful decision that the use of military force is necessary to protect our interests or to carry out our national policy?" His answers were incorporated in six criteria or "tests" to govern decisions to use force in pursuit of political objectives. These tests, which have since become known as the Weinberger Doctrine, remain the subject of controversy. Some national leaders have found the doctrine's guidance useful, while others appear to regard it as a nuisance or even an impediment to carrying out our responsibilities in a post-Cold-War world. So it appears that Secretary Weinberger's tests have raised another question – do they provide national leaders sound guidance concerning the use of military force? That question leads to the central question of this thesis: What does an examination of classical theorists and historical evidence suggest concerning the strategic utility of the Weinberger Doctrine?

The question is particularly relevant in today's strategic environment. Before the end of the cold war, the United States had more compelling external constraints on its use of force than it does now. Fear of angering the Soviet Union or of upsetting the delicate balance of power acted to limit the use of our military forces. The end of the cold war has left the United States as the sole remaining superpower and has greatly reduced such

constraints. At the same time, technical advances such as stealth platforms, precision weapons, and enhanced command and control capabilities have seemingly made war a much less terrible thing to contemplate. There is a growing perception that war can be relatively bloodless and finely controlled by high-level decision-makers, thus leading to increased use of military force. Yet many of our military operations, such as, Somalia, and Haiti, have been widely regarded as products of poor decisions. Therefore, the United States might need some guidelines to help prevent such strategic failures.

It is somewhat ironic that the Weinberger “Doctrine” is not really doctrine at all. Military doctrine has to meet two criteria – it must represent agreed-upon best practices and principles, and the appropriate authoritative body must sanction it. As the next chapters will show, Weinberger’s tests are anything but agreed-upon; and the two entities that can authorize the use of force, the President and Congress, have never officially sanctioned it. Weinberger did not use the word “doctrine” in his original speech: instead, the media applied the label. Therefore, this paper will refer to the tests as the “Weinberger Doctrine” only when quoting source material. Otherwise, it will refer to the propositions as “tests” or “criteria” in accordance with the original speech.

To determine the strategic utility of Weinberger’s criteria for the employment of force, the argument proceeds through three major phases. First, it recapitulates the tests and examines contemporary reactions to them. Second, it assesses them through the lens of several theories on the use of force. Finally, it examines them in light of historical evidence.

The next chapter introduces Weinberger’s tests and assesses the reaction of defense analysts to them. In order to assess Weinberger’s tests comprehensively, it is

necessary to peer at them through as many different lens as feasible. Therefore, the theoretical examination analyzes Weinberger's guidelines from the points of view of three authors: Thucydides – a fifth-century B.C. historian; Carl Von Clausewitz – a nineteenth-century military theorist; and Graham Allison – a contemporary political scientist. These theorists were selected on the basis of diversity and relevance. Diversity should be ensured by the differences in the theorists' fields of study and the times in which they lived. Thucydides claimed that he would remain relevant to future analysts; he investigated basic human themes and intended for his history to withstand the passage of time. In addition, much of Western culture, including our attitudes on war, has its roots in ancient Greece. Clausewitz, the great looming presence in the study of war, might seem an obvious choice but for the fact that Weinberger created his tests for democracies – and Clausewitz was no democrat. Still, Weinberger did not say his tests would be invalid for other forms of government. A study of Clausewitz will provide the additional benefit of illuminating this question. Finally, Allison is relevant because he identifies and investigates hidden assumptions that affect the decision-making process.

The case studies examine the decisions concerning the use of force by America in Vietnam and Kosovo and by Germany in the First World War. These three cases were selected to ensure diversity across five spectra: peer or third world enemies, vital or peripheral interests, limited or unconditional objectives, small or total efforts and finally, popular or unpopular wars. The argument concludes with a summary of the important points and suggested improvements to the criteria.

CHAPTER 2

THE WEINBERGER TESTS

Caspar Weinberger was born in San Francisco in 1917. He received his undergraduate and law degrees from Harvard and enlisted as a U.S. Army private in 1941. He later was commissioned and served in the Pacific on General Douglass McArthur's intelligence staff. After the war, he began a successful law career and became increasingly involved in politics. Governor Ronald Reagan named him chairman of the Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy in 1967 and appointed him State Finance Director of in 1968. He moved to Washington in 1970 to become chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, subsequently serving as deputy director (1970-72) and director (1972-73) of the Office of Management and Budget and as secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (1973-75). For the next five years, Weinberger was vice president and general counsel of the Bechtel Group of Companies in California. He became President Reagan's Secretary of Defense in January 1981. During his tenure, United States armed forces were employed in Lebanon, Grenada, and Libya. He resigned in November 1987, citing his wife's declining health. Many in the press speculated that the reason was his dissatisfaction with the Reagan administration's involvement in the Iran/Contra affair.¹

Secretary Weinberger articulated his six tests in a speech before the National Press Club on 28 November 1984. The Secretary personally wrote the speech, which was

¹ On-line. Internet, 26 February 2001. Available from http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/secdef_histories/bios/weinberger.htm

cleared by the National Security Council and approved by the President.² The tests had their genesis in a number of factors that will be described in the following paragraphs under two broad categories: underlying causes relating to the general post-war environment and immediate causes relating to Secretary Weinberger's personal experience. A very abbreviated summary of the criteria is that the United States should commit combat troops:

1. Only as a matter of vital interest
2. With wholehearted intention of winning
3. Under clearly defined political objectives
4. With continual reassessments
5. With reasonable assurance of support of Congress and the American people
6. As a last resort

The underlying causes of the Weinberger tests go back at least as far as World War II. America learned that military action, even successful action, may have unintended or negative consequences. World War II resulted in the defeat of Nazi fascism and Japanese militarism, but also began a period of Soviet subjugation for the free peoples of Eastern Europe and the Baltic States.³ The Korean War was also difficult for Americans to comprehend, with its limited objectives, eventual stalemate, and uneasy cease-fire – a war never declared and, so far, never ended. The Vietnam War was entered into as a noble cause to help an oppressed people in the fight against the spread of communism. Later, it came to be seen as immoral: a senseless meat-grinder for both the American and Vietnamese people. After a decade-and-a-half in which the United States won every major battle, it withdrew and lost the war.⁴

² David T. Twining, "The Weinberger Doctrine and the Use of Force in the Contemporary Era" in Alan Ned Sabrosky and Robert L. Sloane, eds., *The Recourse to War: An Appraisal of the "Weinberger Doctrine"* (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1989), 17

³ Ibid., 13

⁴ Ibid., 14

If military action sometimes had negative consequences, so did inaction. In the mid-to-late 1970s, the Watergate scandal and the Vietnam debacle paralyzed U.S. foreign policy and permitted communism to gain ground in Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Ogaden, Eritrea, and South Yemen.⁵ To the American policy makers, the use of military force was beginning to look like a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” alternative. The underlying causes are best understood as the results of American policy makers’ fledgling attempts to settle into the role of a world superpower.

The immediate causes of the six tests can be traced to three events in Secretary Weinberger’s experience that he mentions specifically in relation to their development. The first was his participation as Secretary of Defense in meetings concerning the use of force: “we had these constant discussions of committing a couple of companies here, a battalion or so there, and a few planes here and a few ships there, all with the idea that just the appearance of American forces would probably get everything we wanted or needed.”⁶ The second event was American intervention in Beirut, during which, according to Weinberger:

we had, over my personal strong objections, committed for the second time a force without any objectives, without any capabilities of doing anything, or making any kind of difference, whose only capability was to do what they were assigned to do, which was to sit on the Beirut airport without any ability to protect their flanks or the ground in front of them and without any equipment or weapons to do that and without any kind of proper liaison with the other members of the international force that was there.

We went in the second time with no objective other than to have some kind of force there that we assumed and hoped would be the support within the country that would enable us to bring peace to the region, which of course it did not. It invited the very thing that happened – a terrorist

⁵ Ibid., 15-16

⁶ Caspar W. Weinberger, “The Use of Force – The Six Criteria Revisited” *AFA Policy Forum*, 14 September 1999. On-line. Internet, 23 Feb 2001. Available from <http://www.afa.org/library/reports/wein999.html>

attack on the barracks at the Beirut airport – and indicated that when you just put troops in without any kind of real objective, without any kind of goal, without any consideration of proper sizing of the task force, your are inviting danger an disaster, which indeed happened.⁷

The final event was Weinberger's personal military experience:

Because of that experience, I've always felt that there was a great deal more to the decision to commit troops to action than whether it serves some temporary diplomatic cause or whether it was something that seemed to be necessary because of the political situation at the time....if troops were going to be committed to action, it had to be for the kind of cause for which they joined the military. It is essential still that we have that in mind and that we not feel that commitment of a few troops here or a few troops there is something that may serve diplomacy without any regard to what happens to the troops themselves because they are, after all, our very greatest asset.⁸

Thus, the immediate causes can be summarized as follows. First, Weinberger thought the Reagan administration seemed to be too frequently considering the use of force. Second, he felt that many of the employments considered or actually conducted were ill advised and inconsiderate of the lives of American troops, bringing up strong memories of Vietnam. Finally, it seemed necessary for someone to act as an advocate for the men and women of the United States armed forces in order to bring their interests to the decision making process. Weinberger's attempt to do that resulted in the speech proposing the six tests. The remainder of this chapter will examine the tests one by one, giving the text of the original speech followed by an examination of commentaries about the test, both pro and con.

Test 1:

First, the United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies. That emphatically does not mean that we should declare beforehand, as we did with Korea in 1950, that a

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

particular area is outside our strategic perimeter.⁹

Secretary of State Schultz immediately leveled criticism at this test. He believed that the option of military force must remain open for diplomacy to work. He argued that certain circumstances might require the threatened or actual use of force for less than vital interests and that at times the United States might have very little choice in the matter.¹⁰

Other analysts agreed with the spirit of the test, but disagreed with the wording. They agreed that the United States should not use force for less than vital interests, but were concerned that “vital” was nowhere defined in the test. An administration that wanted to use force might be able to call almost any situation a “vital interest” by constructing a “knee bone connected to the thigh bone” chain of reasoning to link a minor cause to a major effect. The end result could be an over extension of the armed forces.¹¹

Many agreed with the test as it stood. They believed that a precise definition of “vital interest” would comprise a breach of security. If our enemies knew which areas were below the threshold of vital interest, then they might be emboldened to act (as in Weinberger’s Korean example). Therefore, they believe the test should stand as written – urging restraint while retaining the necessary ambiguity.

Test 2:

Second, if we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all. Of course if the particular situation requires only limited force to win our objectives, then we should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly. When

⁹ Caspar W. Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon* (New York: Warner Books, 1990), 441

¹⁰ George P. Schultz, “New Ways of Thinking” *Foreign Affairs*, LXIII (Spring 1985), 717

¹¹ Samuel J. Newland and Douglas V. Johnson II, “The Military and Operational Significance of the Weinberger Doctrine” in Sabrosky and Sloane, *The Recourse to War*, 120

Hitler broke treaties and remilitarized the Rhineland, small combat forces then could perhaps have prevented the holocaust of World War II.¹²

Some analysts objected to this test on the grounds that it lacked informational content, noting “countries do not normally go to war when defeat is certain, even if “winning” can be defined in highly variable terms.”¹³

Test 3:

Third, if we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have and send the forces needed to do just that. As Clausewitz wrote, “No one starts a war - or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so - without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it.

War may be different today than in Clausewitz’s time, but the need for well-defined objectives and a consistent strategy is still essential. If we determine that a combat mission has become necessary for our vital national interests, then we must send forces capable to do the job - and not assign a combat mission to a force configured for peacekeeping.¹⁴

Most analysts regarded the third test favorably, though some would like to add the stipulation that the objectives should be achievable, noting, “History is littered with the wreckage of armies that attempted to achieve far more than they were able.”¹⁵.

Test 4:

Fourth, the relationship between our objective and the forces we have committed - their size, composition and disposition - must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the course of a conflict. When they do change, then so must our combat requirements. We must continuously keep as a beacon light before us the basic questions: “Is this conflict in our national interest?” “Does our national interest require us to fight, to use force of arms?” If the answers are “yes,” then we must win. If the answers are “no,” then we should not be in combat.¹⁶

¹² Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace*, 441

¹³ Alan Ned Sabrosky, “Applying Military Force: the Future Significance of the Weinberger Doctrine” in Sabrosky and Sloane, *The Recourse to War*, 149

¹⁴ Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace*, 441

¹⁵ Newland and Johnson, “The Military and Operational Significance of the Weinberger Doctrine” in Sabrosky and Sloane, *The Recourse to War*, 124

¹⁶ Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace*, 442

This test has been faulted on the ground that constant reassessment can contribute to a rudderless strategy. “Granted, in theory, such reassessment should be done objectively and deliberately, but all too often such significant decisions are made either in the euphoria of victory or the depression resulting from disappointment or defeat.”¹⁷ “National interests should be stable and should not be reinterpreted situationally.”¹⁸

“Reassessment of forces and objectives in Korea resulted in the United States changing not only the number of troops, but its original objective of defeating North Korean aggression and restoring the independence of South Korea. The new objective became the defeat and occupation of North Korea. …the resulting entry of China into the war caused a bloody stalemate in the Korean War. With her entry, China took the initiative and, in a conscious reassessment, we chose not to commit the resources to take it back.”¹⁹

Test 5:

Fifth, before the U. S. commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. This support cannot be achieved unless we are candid in making clear the threats we face; the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation. We cannot fight a battle with the Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas or, as in the case of Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win, but just to be there.²⁰

This test has drawn more criticism than any of the others. The arguments are generally of three types. First, the test rejects the notion that some strategically necessary wars and causes may be unpopular. Second, people are fickle. The fact that there may appear to be reasonable assurance of support at the beginning of a conflict is no indication that support will not be eventually, perhaps quickly, withdrawn. Many people forget that Vietnam was not an unpopular war from the outset. Finally, this test has been

¹⁷ Newland and Johnson, in Sabrosky and Sloane, *The Recourse to War*, 131

¹⁸ Ibid., 130

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace*, 442

called impractical. Are we to take a poll? Should we never consider a pre-emptive strike? Do we capitulate or withdraw when support erodes?²¹

Test 6:

Finally, the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.²²

Though most critics believe that major wars should only result after other options have failed, many also believe that some situations might call for the quick use of limited force.

The Tests as a Whole

Some critics find the tests to be internally inconsistent: “After all, the idea that we must not continue a war we cannot win – the fourth test – may, under certain conditions, be inconsistent with the second test, which establishes a precondition to initial commitment that we will not commit at all if we do not intend to win.” Others claim the tests are not useful in the “gray area conflicts” for which they were designed.²³

a literal reading of the tests ‘would appear to preclude limited war, calling as they do for victory and castigating incrementalism as an escalatory option.’ In practice, however, it is only in such ambiguous situations as limited war that the principles enshrined in the Weinberger criteria need to be espoused²⁴

Finally, some analysts think the entire notion of a set of simple and tidy rules to guide such complex, high-level policy is a bad idea to start with. They believe the Weinberger Tests are a poor substitute for good judgment and statesmanship.²⁵

²¹ Newland and Johnson, in Sabrosky and Sloane, *The Recourse to War*, 136-37

²² Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace*, 442

²³ *Ibid.*, 435

²⁴ Alan Ned Sabrosky, “Applying Military Force: the Future Significance of the Weinberger Doctrine,” in Sabrosky and Sloane, *The Recourse to War*, 148

²⁵ Newland and Johnson, in Sabrosky and Sloane, *The Recourse to War*, 138

Practical Utility

The Reagan administration did not embrace the Tests. Reagan's Secretaries of State and of Defense had open disagreement over the use of force. Secretary of State Schultz's philosophy was one of prudent engagement, as opposed to the Weinberger philosophy of cautious restraint. President Reagan never sanctioned the Weinberger tests, nor did his policies appear to follow their guidance.

The first Bush administration apparently found the tests useful, if not as sanctioned doctrine, at least as a starting point for the recourse to war. Desert Storm appeared to follow virtually all of the criteria. An important connection worth noting is that General Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Bush and early Clinton administrations, had worked on Secretary Weinberger's staff during the Reagan administration.

The Clinton administration appeared to reject the tests as a useful policy. This was especially frustrating to General Powell, who wrote:

My constant unwelcome message at all of the meetings on Bosnia was simply that we would not commit military forces unless we had a clear political objective. The debate exploded in one session when Madeline Albright, our Ambassador to the U.N., asked me in frustration, 'What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?' I thought I would have an aneurysm.²⁶

Though the new administration of George W. Bush is largely untested, early indications show that Weinberger's tests may have regained a measure of favor. It is perhaps not an unwarranted assumption that President Bush will be relying on two previously mentioned advocates of the Weinberger Tests for advice – his father, George Bush Sr. and his Secretary of State, General Powell. President George W. Bush gave an

²⁶ Colin L. Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), 576

indication during the election debates that he intends to follow a modified version of the tests to guide his judgment:

Well, if it's in our vital national interest, and that means whether our territory is threatened or people could be harmed, whether or not the alliances are -- our defense alliances are threatened, whether or not our friends in the Middle East are threatened. That would be a time to seriously consider the use of force. Secondly, whether or not the mission was clear. Whether or not it was a clear understanding as to what the mission would be. Thirdly, whether or not we were prepared and trained to win. Whether or not our forces were of high morale and high standing and well-equipped. And finally, whether or not there was an exit strategy. I would take the use of force very seriously. I would be guarded in my approach. I don't think we can be all things to all people in the world. I think we've got to be very careful when we commit our troops. ...I would be very careful about using our troops as nation builders. I believe the role of the military is to fight and win war and therefore prevent war from happening in the first place. ...I believe we're overextended in too many places.²⁷

Given the traditional conflict between the Departments of State, which typically advocates engagement, and the Department of Defense, which typically advocates restraint, it will be interesting to see what influence this will have on General Powell as his responsibilities change.

Chapter Summary

Weinberger created his tests to perform two functions: to provide guidance to Presidents who might otherwise use force unwisely, and to urge restraint. Regarding the utility of the six criteria, contemporary statesmen, analysts, and journalists registered a mixed reaction. Some considered the tests to be a good first attempt to solve a tough and worthy problem. Others thought the idea of a checklist was too simplistic, or that the tests were too constraining, not constraining enough, inconsistent, or too vague. Despite the controversy, the tests have demonstrated remarkable staying power. From the time Weinberger first articulated his tests, none of four presidential administrations has embraced the criteria; yet each administration has found some elements of the tests

²⁷ *The First 2000 Gore-Bush Presidential Debate: October 3, 2000.* On-line. Internet, 23 Feb 2001. Available from <http://www.debates.org/pages/trans2000a.html>

useful, and each has had to consider the six tests before using force (if for no other reason than to field questions from

Chapter 3

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

This chapter examines Weinberger’s tests from the perspectives of Thucydides, Carl von Clausewitz, and Graham Allison. The goal is to determine what each might say about the utility of the tests. Although two of them died before the tests were proposed and the third did not write specifically about them, each of the theorists provided his opinion on subjects very relevant to the decision to use force. Therefore, from each theorist’s writings, the author will attempt to create an appropriate lens for viewing the tests – a pair of Thucydides, Clausewitz, or Allison-colored spectacles to inspect Weinberger’s ideas.

Thucydides

Not much is known of the life of Thucydides. A participant in the war about which he wrote, the author of *The Peloponnesian War* refers to himself (in third person) only a few times throughout the text. From these references, from later Roman and Byzantine biographies, and through inference, scholars have pieced together a sketchy idea of Thucydides’ life. Born to a wealthy Athenian family, Thucydides was well educated and aristocratic. From his well-endowed pedigree and also from his writings, we infer that Thucydides was an oligarch rather than a democratic. A General in the Athenian army, he was exiled for twenty years following his failure to save the town of

Amphipolis.²⁸ During his exile, he was able to observe and record the war from both sides. In the introduction to The Landmark Thucydides, Victor Davis Hanson describes Thucydides as "...a man of action, an elected official, a captain, a traveler, and a pragmatic intellectual, a successful combatant against warrior and disease alike, hardbitten and intimate with both privilege and disgrace, a man who suffered with and outlived most of the greatest men of his age."²⁹

It may seem odd that this study places Thucydides in the chapter on theory, rather than among the case studies. The reasons are that The Peloponnesian War is more than a history and Thucydides more than a mere recorder of facts. He sought to describe the underlying and timeless themes surrounding human nature and warfare. Thucydides wanted us to use his history for research as in the present work. In his words, "if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the understanding of the future...I shall be content. In fine, I have written my work, not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time."³⁰

The Peloponnesian War developed from what we now call a classic security dilemma – a mutual escalation of fear and suspicion between Athens and Sparta. The two city-states had previously been allies in their successful war against Persia. Athens had been a great sea power and many of the city-states in Greece (the Hellas) made financial contributions to help support its naval effort against Persia. When the war ended, Athens had become used to this financial support and began to use her power to

²⁸ Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, with an introduction by Victor Davis Hanson (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 316

²⁹ Victor Davis Hanson, introduction to *The Landmark Thucydides*, xi

³⁰ Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 16

retain control of its allies. As Athens became increasingly greedy, many of the city-states became disgruntled and appealed to Sparta for help. The ensuing Peloponnesian War between Sparta and Athens lasted twenty-seven years. It lasted so long partly because it was an asymmetric conflict. Sparta had a powerful army, but almost no navy. Athens had a powerful navy, but a much weaker army. Thus, there was little prospect for a decisive battle because Sparta avoided the Athenian navy, and Athens avoided the Spartan army. Eventually, Athens made an ill-advised decision to attack Sicily – a campaign that ended in disaster. Sparta was then able to use her newly-developed navy to defeat the weakened Athenians.

The people of Sparta voted to declare war on Athens after hearing the various arguments presented at political assembly. The main speakers were the Corinthians (a Spartan ally); the Spartan King, Archidamus; a Spartan government official named Sthenelaidas; and, curiously enough, members of an Athenian delegation who were present on other business.

The Corinthians urged Sparta to declare war, claiming it was justified or even required. First, they played on Sparta's fear, pointing out that Athens' lust for power was slowly swallowing and subjugating the entire region. Second, they impugned Sparta's honor and blamed it for Athens' actions, saying the "true author of the subjugation of a people is not so much the immediate agent, as the power which permits it having the means to prevent it; particularly if that power aspires to the glory of being the liberator of Hellas." Finally, they claimed that war was in Sparta's best interest, saying that failure to uphold its obligations would result in the loss of its allies. Notably absent from the

Corinthians speech was any reference to the feasibility, practicality, or objectives of the war it was recommending.³¹

The Athenians were next to speak, defending their position by claiming that they were victims of circumstance. They did not deny any of the Corinthians' accusations. Instead they claimed they were peacefully and honorably thrust into their dominant position when they accepted the lead role in the last war against Persia. They said that their allies willingly attached themselves to Athens and that they could not be blamed for wanting to retain their preeminent position after the war: "it was not a very remarkable action, or contrary to the common practice of mankind, if we did accept an empire that was offered to us, and refused to give it up under the pressure of three of the strongest motives, fear, honor, and interest." They concluded their speech with a warning that Sparta should tread cautiously because Athens was fully prepared to defend itself.³²

Archidamus then delivered a speech to dissuade Sparta from embarking upon war – a speech that demonstrates an extraordinary grasp of strategy and the dialectic between ends and means. He began with the assumption that the desired end was to defeat Athens and then demonstrated that Sparta did not possess the means to do so. He next described what they could do with their existing means in order to determine if they could arrive at an acceptable end other than outright military victory. Finding no acceptable balance between ends and means, he argued against war:

But Archidamus, the Spartan king, who had the reputation of being at once a wise and a moderate man, came forward and made the following speech:

I have not lived so long, Spartans, without having had the experience of many wars, and I see those among you of the same age as myself, who will not fall into the common misfortune of longing for war from

³¹ Ibid., 38-41

³² Ibid., 41-45

inexperience or from a belief in its advantage and its safety. This, the war on which you are now debating, would be one of the greatest magnitude, on a sober consideration of the matter. In a struggle with Peloponnesians and neighbors our strength is of the same character, and it is possible to move swiftly on the different points. But a struggle with a people who live in a distant land, who have also an extraordinary familiarity with the sea, and who are in the highest state of preparation in every other department; with wealth private and public, with ships, and horses, and hoplites, and a population such as no one other Hellenic place can equal, and lastly a large number of tributary allies – what can justify us in rashly beginning such a struggle? Wherein is our trust that we should rush on it unprepared? Is it in our ships? There we are inferior; while if we are to practice and become a match for them, time must intervene. Is it in our money? There we have a far greater deficiency. We neither have it in our treasury, nor are we ready to contribute it from our private funds.

Confidence might possibly be felt in our superiority in hoplites and population, which will enable us to invade and devastate their lands. But the Athenians have plenty of other land in their empire, and can import what they want by sea. Again, if we are to attempt an insurrection of their allies, these will have to be supported with a fleet, most of them being islanders. What then is to be our war? For unless we can either beat them at sea, or deprive them of the revenues, which feed their navy, we shall meet with little but disaster. Meanwhile our honor will be pledged to keeping on, particularly if it be the opinion that we began the quarrel. For let us never be elated by the fatal hope of the war being quickly ended by the devastation of their lands. I fear rather that we may leave it as a legacy to our children; so improbable is it that the Athenian spirit will be the slave of their land, or Athenian experience be cowed by war.³³

Archidamus concluded by offering an alternative. He suggested Sparta should engage Athens in a lengthy diplomatic effort to resolve their differences, while at the same time seeking allies, finances, and building a navy. If the diplomatic effort should succeed, then war would be unnecessary. If it were to fail, then Sparta would possess the means to obtain her desired ends.³⁴

Sthenelaidas then spoke to the assembly, changing the subject from practical considerations back to the more crowd-pleasing emotional appeal for war. He claimed

³³ Ibid., 45

not to understand the fancy speech of the Athenians and noted that they never denied the accusations hurled against them. He then put the question to the people, who voted to declare hostilities on Athens without ever answering Archidamus' question, "What then is to be our war?" Thucydides noted that the Spartans declared war "not so much because they were persuaded by the arguments of the allies, as because they feared the growth of the power of the Athenians, seeing most of the Hellas already subject to them."³⁵

The asymmetric nature of the imminent war also caused problems for Pericles, the Athenian leader. Pericles' strategy was to gather the population behind the walls of Athens in order to avoid the Spartan army. The Athenian navy was to make spoiling raids upon Sparta and her allies. Pericles knew that Spartan forces would ravage the country in attempt to draw out the Athenian army, thus his strategy was going to be very unpopular with the people. This situation caused Thucydides to comment on the subject of public support for military effort:

Pericles indeed, by his rank, ability, and known integrity, was enabled to exercise an independent control over the multitude – in short, to lead them instead of being led by them; for as he never sought power by improper means, he was never compelled to flatter them, but, on the contrary, enjoyed so high an estimation that he could afford to anger them by contradiction. Whenever he saw them unseasonably and insolently elated, he would with a word reduce them to alarm; on the other hand, if they fell victims to a panic, he could at once restore them to confidence. In short, what was nominally a democracy was becoming in his hands government by the first citizen. With his successors it was different. More on a level with one another, and each grasping at supremacy, they ended by committing even the conduct of state affairs to the whims of the multitude. This, as might have been expected in a great and sovereign state, produced a host of blunders, and amongst them the Sicilian expedition; though this failed not so much through a miscalculation of the power of those against whom it was sent, as through a fault in the senders in not taking the best

³⁴ Ibid., 46

³⁵ Ibid., 48-49

measures afterwards to assist those who had gone out, but choosing rather to occupy themselves with private squabbles for the leadership of The People, by which they not only paralyzed operations in the field, but also first introduced civil discord at home.³⁶

The blunder of the Sicilian expedition gave Thucydides another opportunity to explore the issues surrounding the decision to use force. Nicias argued strongly against the proposed campaign in Sicily. His speech not only questioned the strategic feasibility of such an effort, but also the motives behind it. He tried to persuade the Athenians that it was not in Athens' best interest to seek another enemy before the Spartans had been defeated. He also said that any fear of a Sicilian alliance with Sparta was unfounded. He then implied that the real reason for the proposed expedition was a desire by ambitious young Athenians for glory and treasure.³⁷

The people overruled Nicias after a spirited debate. Alcibiades, who wished to lead the expedition and who stood to gain from the adventure in personal wealth and reputation, argued against Nicias, claiming that Sicily was weak, and could be easily defeated. He urged Athens to strive for glory and empire. Nicias presented a different estimate: that Sicily was a formidable opponent: that the problems were compounded by the great distance between Sicily and Athens. Believing the people would be discouraged by the magnitude of the undertaking, he argued that Athens would have to put forth an enormous effort to succeed.. The people, however, at once became very enthusiastic for such a grand adventure, and voted their approval for what was to become a disastrous undertaking.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid., 127-28

³⁷ Ibid., 368-69

³⁸ Ibid., 370-75

Analysis

Although Thucydides addresses many of the same issues as Weinberger, he organized them differently. According to Thucydides, a leader first determined the underlying motivation for war: whether fear, honor, interest, or some combination of the three. Next, he formulated and evaluated strategy to determine the feasibility of achieving any possible set of objectives that was consistent with the state's motivation for war. The decision was rendered only after this process was complete. In contrast, Weinberger's first test (vital interest) excludes reasons for war other than interest. It also forces the decision-maker to reach a preliminary judgment as to the vitality of the interest: a judgment that could create a pro-war bias the remaining tests can only hope to overcome.

To illustrate the difference between the two methods, consider Sparta's decision to declare war. From the speech of the Corinthians, Archidamus knew that the motivation for war was fear of the Athenians' growing power and their willingness to use it. He then examined the feasibility of several different strategies to see if an achievable set of objectives existed that would alleviate Sparta's fear of Athens. Finding no feasible military strategy that was consistent with Sparta's motivation, he recommended diplomacy. If Archidamus had instead used Weinberger's tests, he would first have been required to express fear of Athens in terms of Sparta's interests. He would then have been required to determine whether the interest was vital. Presumably, this would have involved considerable discussion with his oppressed allies, the Corinthians. If he reached the conclusion that disassembling Athens' empire represented a vital interest, then the remaining tests would offer little obstacle to the use of force. The Spartans had a

large army that they were willing to use. Archidamus could have set clear objectives for the Spartan army to ravage Attica and attempt to lure Athens into a land battle. Spartan public support for war had reached a fever pitch and reasonable alternatives to war had already been rejected by Athens.

The other major disagreement between Thucydidean logic and Weinberger's tests is the subject of public support. In his description of Pericles, Thucydides tells us that important state decisions should be reserved for wise and informed leaders. There is no such thing as assurance of support where the uneducated mob is concerned. The public is easily swayed to make bad decisions. They are fickle. Leaders must develop strategies to deal with public support, just as they must with the enemy.

Thucydides also differs with Weinberger regarding the use of force as a last resort. Thucydides does not reject any feasible strategies. Only if more than one strategy is feasible and consistent with the state's motivation, would he recommend the more humane option of least force.³⁹

The greatest concurrence between Thucydides and Weinberger's test is the need to reassess the use of force during a war. There are numerous examples in The Peloponnesian War where decision-makers reevaluate the situation. We should note, however, that some of the reevaluations resulted in poor decisions: the Sicily expedition, for example.

Carl Von Clausewitz

Carl Von Clausewitz was born in 1770 and served in the Prussian army during the time of the Napoleonic Wars. He entered the War College in 1901, graduating two years

later at the head of his class. With his keen intellect, Clausewitz recognized that attempts to describe the reasons behind Napoleon's success by contemporary theorists such as Heinrich Von Bulow and Antoine Jomini were less than comprehensive. He published a lengthy critique of Von Bulow, setting a course of intellectual inquiry into the nature of war that culminated in his masterwork: On War.⁴⁰

Arguably the single most relevant passage from Clausewitz is the one that Weinberger quotes in his third test. The passage is presented here in its entirety:

War plans cover every aspect of a war, and weave them all into a single operation that must have a single, ultimate objective in which all Particular aims are reconciled. No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter its operational objective. This is the governing principle which will set its course, prescribe the scale of means and effort which is required, and make its influence felt throughout down to the smallest operational detail.⁴¹

This citation makes two crucial points. First, a leader must determine the strategy before deciding to enter a war. Second, the elements of strategy are interrelated and prescriptive, thus they require careful reconciliation in order to arrive at a coherent strategy. This, according to Clausewitz, was easier said than done.

Clausewitz believed that because war was a human activity it was extraordinarily complex. This inherent complexity, therefore, complicated the role of the analyst. What he called "Moral forces" defied scientific categorization. Every war represented a unique problem with multiple interrelated factors to consider. Strategy called for intelligence

³⁹ see Melian dialogue and Mytilene revolt in Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 351-57, 175-83

⁴⁰ Peter Paret, introductory essay to Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, with introductory essays by Peter Paret, Michael Howard, and Bernard Brodie, with a commentary by Bernard Brodie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 3-10

⁴¹ Ibid., 579

and study – a combination that, at the highest level, created what Clausewitz called “genius”.

The complexity and nature of war inhibit attempts to distill its principles into discrete instructions for the war-fighter or strategist. Clausewitz was very clear on this point: “In our reflections on the theory of the conduct of war, we said that it ought to train a commander’s mind, or rather, guide his education; theory is not meant to provide him with positive doctrines and systems to be used as intellectual tools. ...the critic should not apply them like an external law or an algebraic formula whose relevance need not be established each time it is used.”⁴²

Instead, Clausewitz advocated a balanced dialectic between policy and the use of military force that finds expression in a state’s wartime objectives. Just as a state can adjust its military effort to secure its policy goals, it can also adjust its policy to match the amount of military force it is willing to employ.

“If we keep in mind that war springs from some political purpose, it is natural that the prime cause of its existence will remain the supreme consideration in conducting it. That, however, does not imply that the political aim is a tyrant. It must adapt itself to its chosen means [war], a process which can radically change it; yet the political aim remains the first consideration.”⁴³

A state considering war must carefully adjust the size of its forces to ensure that its military effort is neither too small nor too large. Forces should be “adequate to score a decisive victory over the enemy, [and to] make the effort necessary to pursue out victory to the point where balance is beyond all possible redress.”⁴⁴ The degree of force required

⁴² Clausewitz, *On War*, 168

⁴³ Ibid., 87

⁴⁴ Ibid., 597

depends largely on the political demands of the belligerents but is also influenced by their strength of will, character, and abilities.⁴⁵

These three considerations introduce uncertainties that make it difficult to gauge the amount of resistance to be faced and, in consequence, the means required and the objectives to be set. Since in war too small an effort can result not just in failure but in positive harm, each side is driven to outdo the other, which sets up an interaction. Such an interaction could lead to a maximum effort if a maximum could be defined. But in that case all proportion between action and political demands would be lost: means would cease to be commensurate with ends, and in most cases a policy of maximum exertion would fail because of the domestic problems it would raise.⁴⁶

In the determination of objectives, Clausewitz tells us that there can be many paths to victory. These range from brute force objectives such as the destruction of fielded forces, conquest of territory, or temporary occupation, to coercive objectives that cause general damage, increase the enemy's suffering, or wear him down, to objectives that seek direct political effects by disrupting or paralyzing the opposing alliance, gaining friendly allies, or otherwise favorably affecting the political scene.

According to Clausewitz, a leader should select objectives based on a careful analysis of many factors. A strategist should not view the state as a unitary actor, but should consider the effects of his proposed strategy on the components that comprise the state or add to its power. The three main considerations are the armed forces, the country, and the enemy's will.⁴⁷ If the army is defeated, the country can raise a new army. Even if the country is occupied, the enemy might still be able to resist unless his will is broken. These three areas must be considered in relation to the political aims sought. If the aims are small, the will of the enemy might be easily broken without the

⁴⁵ Ibid., 585

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 90

need to defeat the fielded forces. If the aims are large, the will of the enemy may not break until the fielded forces are defeated and the country occupied.

Clausewitz knew from first-hand experience that war is a terrible thing, but he also realized that attempts to make it less terrible might only lead to more carnage: “Avoidance of bloodshed, then, should not be taken as an act of policy if our main concern is to preserve our forces. On the contrary, if such a policy did not suit the particular situation it would lead our forces to disaster. A great many generals have failed through this mistaken assumption.”⁴⁸ Again we see that Clausewitz calls for a balance between political aims and military methods. He specifically addresses the dangers posed by approaching a limited war with an expectation of limited casualties.

If the political aims are small, the motives slight and tensions low, a prudent general may look for any way to avoid major crises and decisive actions, exploit any weaknesses in the opponent's military and political strategy, and finally reach a peaceful settlement. If his assumptions are sound and promise success we are not entitled to criticize him. But he must never forget that he is moving on devious paths where the god of war may catch him unawares. He must always keep an eye on his opponent so that he does not, if the latter has taken up a sharp sword, approach him armed only with an ornamental rapier.⁴⁹

Clausewitz believed that popular opinion also exerts a large influence on the dialectic between military strategy and political policy. The people, together with the army and government, symbolized the interplay of violence, chance and reason – elements that Clausewitz called a curious trinity. But Clausewitz was adamant that these elements did not constitute a fixed menu for the nature of war: “A theory that ignores any

⁴⁸ Ibid., 98

⁴⁹ Ibid., 99

one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless.”⁵⁰

Thus, public opinion both influences and is influenced by military and political factors. General sentiment for war “might be so aroused that the political factor would be hard put to control them. ...On the other hand, if policy is directed only toward minor objectives, the emotions of the masses will be little stirred and they will have to be stimulated rather than held back.”⁵¹

Analysis

Before examining each test in detail, one must note that Clausewitz’s theory presents two strong objections to Weinberger’s tests as a whole. First, Clausewitz disliked the notion of discrete instructions or positive doctrines. Six short tests are a poor substitute for a lifetime of study. Second, Clausewitz agreed with Thucydides that the decision to use force should be preceded by the determination of strategy. Weinberger’s discussed the elements of strategy in his tests, but did not require them to fit together in a coherent fashion as Clausewitz required. Criteria that Weinberger expressed as independent variables are actually highly dependent variables in a properly formulated strategy: objectives depend on the interests the state wishes to secure; the size of military forces depends on the objectives sought; finally, willingness to use force should depend on the balance between the size of military effort required and the importance of the interest. Considering the fact that Weinberger created his tests to urge restraint, it seems

⁵⁰ Ibid., 89

⁵¹ Ibid., 88

odd that he omitted the constraints imposed by strategy. Such constraints would greatly reduce or perhaps eliminate the decision-makers options regarding the use of force.

Test 1. An evaluation of the first test requires one to define vital interest at least in general context if not in specific detail. There are two basic possibilities. First, vital interest could mean anything worth fighting for, in which case the first test is reduced to a meaningless tautology. Second, vital interest could represent a measurable standard to be defined by the decision-maker. The context behind the creation of the criteria implies that this is what Weinberger meant. He intended to urge restraint when considering the use of force. Therefore, it is not enough that a president wishes to use force; the situation must exceed some other threshold of importance. The implication is that war is too terrible to consider for situations that do not meet the standard of vital interest.

Clausewitz would disagree with this idea. First, rather than Clausewitz's notion of a balanced equation between the two variables of ends and means, Weinberger treats the means (force) as a fixed quantity and requires the ends (the political interests) to exceed the threshold. This fixed relationship between the means (war) and the ends (political aims) is a recipe for failure in Clausewitz's opinion. The effect of Weinberger's first test is that the means are allowed to become a "tyrant" over the ends in the determination of policy. Second, a state might find itself unable to carry out certain aspects of its policy if it is unwilling to wage war for limited interests. This follows from his famous observation that "war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means."⁵² By prohibiting the use of force for all but vital interests, a state would hinder its ability to carry out policy for issues that require more coercion than diplomacy or economic

sanctions can generate. In other words, the state could influence events at the highest and lowest ends of the spectrum of interest, but be hamstrung in the middle ground. Third, history showed Clausewitz that wars are often fought for less than vital interests – and often very successfully. Clausewitz tells us that the general must be prepared to fight such wars and goes into detail as to how.

Test 2. Clausewitz would agree that the intent of war is to win. He would also agree that the size of the forces should be scaled to match the objectives sought. However, he would disagree that a state unwilling to commit the forces required to achieve the political objectives should not commit forces at all. Clausewitz tells us that we have another choice – the political objectives could be scaled to match the forces available. If we can find an acceptable balance between the forces we are willing to commit and the political objectives we are willing to accept, then the use of force remains a viable option.

Test 3. Clausewitz would agree that a state should have clearly defined political and military objectives. However, this test would have disturbed him greatly. Selecting the wrong objectives is potentially more damaging than having no objectives at all. He would have suggested that any leader so uneducated in military affairs that he needs to be told to make objectives should not be trusted to come up with the right objectives. He would require a much more detailed education in the correct selection and matching of political and military objectives.

Test 4. Clausewitz would agree that we should continually reassess the situation with regard to objectives and forces. But he would have had the same objection as above.

⁵² Ibid., 87

Reassessing poorly can be as bad as not reassessing at all. The art is so subtle that anyone who needs to be told to do it will probably not get it right.

Test 5. Clausewitz would disagree that we must have assurance of support from the American people and their representatives. The people are only one part of a trilogy that also includes the military and the government. These three elements must be balanced to meet the specific situation. Here again (as in the first test), Weinberger attempts to establish a fixed relationship between elements that are continuously variable.

Test 6. Clausewitz would disagree that we should commit forces only as a last resort.

Graham Allison

Graham Allison is the Douglas Dillon Professor of Government at Harvard University and Director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. Under the Clinton Administration, Dr. Allison served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy and Plans and coordinated DOD strategy and policy toward Russia, Ukraine, and the other states of the former Soviet Union. He continues as Special Advisor to the Secretary of Defense. As Dean from 1977 to 1989, he built Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.⁵³

Allison recognized that attempts to explain an historical event often introduce an unrecognized bias corresponding to the particular method of analysis used. For instance, when someone tries to determine the reason behind a war, he implicitly puts himself in the place of the nation or national government and tries to determine a logical reason for

⁵³ On-line. Internet, 14 June 2001. Available from <http://www.ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/BCSIA/BCSIA.nsf/bios/AllisonGraham>

the nation's behavior. This method is simple and sometimes fairly effective, but it assumes that a nation behaves like a unitary actor and neglects the fact that states are conglomerates of large organizations and political actors.

Allison's solution is to apply three different methods of analysis (or conceptual models) to a problem in order to reduce the bias. Model I analyze the state as if it were a unitary actor, Model II assesses state behavior in terms of organizational processes, finally, Model III examines state behavior through the lense of governmental politics. The following paragraphs will describe each of these models in detail.

The Model I paradigm treats government action as a value-maximizing choice. According to this model, a state determines its goals and objectives, examines all the options, evaluates the consequences of each option in terms of costs and benefits, and makes its choice. This method seems perfectly acceptable to many of us because it so familiar. In reality, there are huge assumptions and problems associated with this model. The number of possible state goals, objectives, and options approaches infinity. One single decision-maker must somehow evaluate an infinite number of options, find the perfect choice, and implement the decision.

The Model II paradigm treats government action as organizational output. The decision-maker is not a unitary actor, but an organization (or group of organizations). The concept of perfect rationality is replaced with bounded rationality in order to simplify the decision. Therefore, the options are limited instead of infinite, and the solution is "good enough" instead of perfect. Organizations have several major characteristics in the way they deal with problems. No single unit has all the power or tries to solve the entire problem. Instead, power is distributed among different factions

and problems are factored. Organizations seek to avoid uncertainty or risk. They typically establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and attend to their goals sequentially. Thus, an organization develops a finite number of repertoires that form the set of available options. As Allison puts it; “If a nation performs an action of a certain type today, its organizational components must yesterday have been performing (or have had established routines for performing) an action only marginally different from today’s action.”⁵⁴

Model III treats government action as a political resultant. In this model, a decision “is not chosen as a solution to a problem but rather results from compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence.”⁵⁵ The model takes human personalities and the intricacies of power politics into consideration.

An admittedly oversimplified example will serve to illustrate the use of the different conceptual models. A Model I analyst might say that the United States built the B-2 bomber because it was the logical, most effective way to fulfill certain aspects of our national security objectives. A Model II analyst might say that the Air Force decided to build the B-2 as a result of organizational processes. The Air Force had always built large bombers, so the B-2 was simply the latest manifestation of that tradition. A Model III analyst might say that politicians decided to build the B-2 because their support would result in juicy defense contracts for their home states. None of these single explanations is completely satisfactory, but the exercise of looking at all three models certainly gives additional insight into how decisions are made.

⁵⁴ Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Harper Collins, 1971), 87

⁵⁵ Ibid., 162

Analysis

Weinberger's tests exhibit different characteristics when viewed through Allison's different lenses. Looking through the Model I lens allows us to view the Weinberger criteria as a cost/benefit equation. The cause must be inherently valuable (test one – vital interest). The decision-maker must consider it worthwhile (test two – willingness,), as well as the people (test five – assurance of support). Decision-makers must take all steps to avoid the cost (test six – last resort). Finally, if force is employed, leaders must take the necessary steps to minimize the cost and reap the benefits (tests two –intent to win; and test three –clear objectives).

The Model II lens allows us to view the tests as an attempt to provide standard operating procedures for a large organization (the United States). Weinberger's tests embody important characteristics of Model II thinking. Organizational processes tend to address problems sequentially. Weinberger's tests exhibit this characteristic, evaluating the use of force sequentially through a six-step process. Risk reduction is another characteristic of Model II thinking, and this characteristic also permeates Weinberger's tests. If the decision to use force can be reduced to a known procedure, there is less risk that an unwise statesman will make a poor, extemporaneous decision. The risk to American lives will also be reduced because the tests should result in a more prudent and less frequent use of force.

The tests do not lend themselves to a strictly Model III interpretation. A leader of a democracy should act as the representative of the people. Therefore, the decision to use force should be based on the best interests of the state, modeled either as a rational actor (Model I) or as an organization (Model II). A democratic leader should not subjugate the

well-being of the people for his own personal political benefit (Model III). Perhaps Allison's Model III, by showing what can go wrong with democratic decision-making, illustrates the need to provide guidance that focuses the decision-maker on the other two models, as Weinberger has attempted to do.

The preceding analysis is informative, but to evaluate the utility of Weinberger's tests, we must do more than peer through each lens. We must examine each test to see if it wrongly emphasizes or excludes any particular model. The first test concerning vital interest places too much emphasis on Model I. Wars are not always just a clash of rational interests, but are sometimes a clash of societies, of organizations, or of personal wills. Though these often express themselves in terms of interest (language can be a problem – almost any motive can be expressed in terms of interest), they cannot be represented as variables in neat cost/benefit equations.

The second and third tests concerning the intent to win, sufficient forces, and clear objectives provide very interesting grounds for analysis. Neither test excludes any of Allison's models. Both tests appear useful when viewed through any lens. Certainly a rational actor, an organization, or a politician would each want to win, to use sufficient force, and to have clear objectives. However, a state cannot be represented by any one of Allison's models: instead, it is a complex amalgam of all three. Rational actors, organizations, and politicians each might have different ideas as to what constitutes vital interest, winning, and clear objectives. Problems can occur if decision-makers fail to maintain a consistent frame of reference.

For example, one can argue that the U.S. had rational, Model I interests in Vietnam. Southeast Asia produced rubber, oil, tin, tungsten, and other strategic

commodities. One could also argue that there were strong Model II interests behind the Vietnam War. The Soviet Union had set a policy of support third-world insurgencies and America had a policy to contain communism. H. R. McMaster argues in *Dereliction of Duty* that Model III interests had great impact on President Johnson's decision to escalate and on the American strategy in Vietnam. Johnson believed Republicans would attack him if he appeared to be soft on communism, or if he appeared too hawkish.⁵⁶ The resulting Model III-derived strategy of gradualism and limited objectives was inconsistent with America's Model I and Model II interests in Vietnam. If America had vital Model I and II interests in Vietnam, the strategy should have been designed to address those issues instead of the issues affecting Johnson's political career. One concludes that Weinberger's third test should explicitly require objectives to be consistent with America's interests.

The fourth test (continuous reassessments) does not consider how to make a decision, but rather the frequency with which decisions should be reevaluated. Therefore, it is not conducive to analysis by Allison's models. The fifth test requiring assurance of support from the people wrongly asserts Model II over Model I. The people do not always know what is in their best interests. This is especially true when the decision involves a tradeoff between a temporary, immediate inconvenience, and future gain. Pericles' strategy to gather the people behind the walls of Athens was unpopular but effective. When Pericles died, the people abandoned his strategy, much to the detriment of the state.

⁵⁶ H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998), 108, 117

Finally, the requirement that force be used only as a last resort (test six) tends to exclude Model I. A situation might arise where it is in the state's best interest that force be used before all other options are exhausted. Perhaps an example of this is the lack of an effective allied response to Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland.

Chapter Summary

All theorists indicate that the decision to use force is a more complex problem than Weinberger's six tests indicate. Clausewitz, especially, was vehemently opposed to the type of checklist mentality inherent in Weinberger's tests.

None of the three theorists supports Weinberger's claim that force should be used only in matters of vital interest. Thucydides included fear and honor in addition to interest as the primary motives for war. Clausewitz rejected the notion of any fixed relationship between means and ends. Finally, the rational actor of Allison's Model 1 would certainly be concerned with interests; but Allison also provides two other models that provide organizational and political motives for making decisions.

Thucydides and Clausewitz wrote about political and military objectives; but unlike Weinberger, they stressed that these must be carefully matched in a coherent strategy. According to Thucydides, if a proper match between means and ends cannot be discovered, then the use of force is unwise, regardless of the strength of motivation. Allison's different models show that there might be powerful forces driving decision-makers to adopt a schizophrenic strategy in an attempt to accommodate national, organizational, and political considerations.

None of the theorists agree with Weinberger's test concerning assurance of congressional and public support. All indicate that popular attitudes will be variable, and

that national leaders will have to deal with the problem. Weinberger's desire to eliminate part of the friction of war is understandable, but not realistic.

All agree that the use of force should be continuously monitored and reassessed. None of the theorists recommend that force should be used only as a last resort. They imply that such restraint is desirable, but dependent on the situation.

Chapter 4

CASE STUDIES

This chapter evaluates Weinberger's tests by examining historical evidence from three cases. The specific situations analyzed are Germany's decision to provide unconditional support to Austria (a major cause of WWI), America's decision to escalate its involvement in Vietnam during the Kennedy administration, and America's decision to intervene in Kosovo during Allied Force. These cases are relevant to this study because they provide diversity across the spectra of interest, level of effort, enemy capabilities, objectives sought, and popularity.

Germany's "Blank Check" to Austria - 6 July 1914

According to the historian Sidney Fay, there were six underlying causes of World War I. These were the system of secret alliances, militarism, nationalism, economic imperialism, and the press. The Great Powers of Europe developed the system of secret alliances in an attempt to maintain the balance of power during the rapid social changes and economic growth spurred by the industrial revolution. The Triple Entente of France, Russia, and England sought to contain Germany's rapidly growing industrial and military might. Germany, fearing that the Triple Entente was forging around them an "iron ring," sought to augment her power by maintaining the Triple Alliance along with Austria-

Hungary, and Italy. The system of alliances made it virtually certain that war among any of the Great Powers of Europe would soon involve all the Great Powers of Europe.⁵⁷

If militarism is meant to connote the undue influence of military considerations in the state and society, it probably finds its modern roots in the seventeenth century formation of the Prussian State. It continued to flourish in revolutionary and Napoleonic France and was subsequently emulated in much of the rest of continental Europe. Militarism created an environment of, suspicion, fear, hatred, and secrecy. It also produced a powerful class of military officers who exerted influence upon civilian authorities in times of crisis.⁵⁸ These officers generally held to the theory that fortune smiled upon the state that could mobilize and strike before the enemy had completed the process of transforming itself from a peace to a war footing. The result was a political-military conundrum:

In a political crisis, therefore, the military leaders were always quick to conclude that war was ‘inevitable,’ and exerted all their influence to persuade the ruling civilian authorities to consent to an order for general mobilization at the earliest possible moment, in order to gain the advantage of the offensive. But a general mobilization, according to prevailing military opinion, actually did make war inevitable.⁵⁹

Nationalism is somewhat of a two-edged sword. It had helped to unify Germany and Italy, but it also resulted in Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism that nourished hatred between Germany and its eastern neighbors. One of the effects of Pan-Slavism was the movement to establish a Greater Serbia by reclaiming territory then held by the Austrian Empire: land that had been historically Slavic and that was largely populated by Slavs.⁶⁰ In Germany, the Kaiser had aspirations to become a great world power. Germany

⁵⁷ Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Origins of the World War* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), 34

⁵⁸ Ibid., 39

⁵⁹ Ibid., 41

⁶⁰ Ibid., 44, 358

embarked upon the construction of a great navy that would enable it to establish colonies and that brought it into conflict with England.⁶¹ Russia too, was in the process of rebuilding its economic and military might after its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War.

Economic imperialism was the product of rivalries created by the industrial revolution and the struggle for new markets and sources of raw materials.⁶² Germany had almost miraculously risen to become Europe's chief industrial state by virtue of its "unequaled technological virtuosity, organizing powers, broad education, and mass discipline of the workers."⁶³ Britain had been the first industrial state in the world in 1870 but had fallen to number three by 1913, while France declined from second to fourth position. Austria-Hungary was on the verge of collapse, and Russia, while still struggling, was beginning to surge forward. This upsetting and not fully understood situation served as a major motivation for the system of secret alliances.⁶⁴

The final major underlying cause of the war was the media. In the period before World War I, "newspapers of two countries often took up some point of dispute, exaggerated it, and made attacks and counter-attacks, until a regular newspaper war was engendered, which thoroughly poisoned public opinion, and so offered a fertile soil in which the seeds of real war might easily germinate."⁶⁵

The immediate causes of the war were the major events that occurred during the July crisis of 1914. These were the assassination of Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand

⁶¹ Ibid., 234-35

⁶² Ibid., 44-45

⁶³ Bernadotte E. Schmitt and Harold C. Vedeler, *The World in the Crucible, 1914-1919* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 2

⁶⁴ Ibid., 2-3

⁶⁵ Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 48

by Serbian students, Germany's decision to support any Austrian response, and the Austrian ultimatum issued to Serbia.

Archduke Ferdinand, the Emperor's nephew and the heir to the throne, was shot on June 28, 1914. The assassin was a member of the "Black Hand," a radical Serbian movement. The Austrian Foreign Minister, Count Leopold Berchtold, was convinced that the Serbian situation was already intolerable and likely to get worse. He sought a military solution to the problem but knew that maneuvering his country into war would be a delicate matter. The Austrian Emperor, Franz Joseph and the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Stephan Tisza, both desired a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Berchtold could hope to convince them of war only with assurance of German support.⁶⁶ To that end, Berchtold prepared a double-faced letter for Franz Joseph to send to Kaiser Wilhelm, II. Most of it was devoted to Tisza's peace program for a diplomatic shift in the Balkans to strengthen the hold on Rumania, win Bulgaria, and isolate Serbia. But the end of the letter was calculated to convince the two Monarchs of Serbia's responsibility for the assassination and to gain support for unspecified action.⁶⁷ The letter called for Serbia to be, "eliminated as a political factor in the Balkans. After the last frightful events in Bosnia, you too will be convinced that a friendly settlement of the antagonism which divides Austria from Serbia is no longer to be thought of, and that the peace policy of all European monarchs is threatened so long as the source of criminal agitation lives on unpunished."⁶⁸

Kaiser Wilhelm's official decision to support decisive Austrian actions toward Serbia was expressed in a telegram to Vienna. The last paragraph has become known as

⁶⁶ Ibid., 186

⁶⁷ Ibid., 201

the “blank check” and reads as follows: “Finally, concerning Serbia, His Majesty [the Kaiser] naturally can not take any stand in the questions between Austria and Serbia, for they are beyond his competence, but Francis Joseph may be sure that His Majesty, in accordance with his treaty obligations and old friendship, will stand true by Austria’s side.”⁶⁹ The two key questions are why did the Kaiser favor strong action by Austria, and why would he not involve himself in such an important decision?

From one perspective, it was in Germany’s best interests that Austria should take stern action against Serbia. Failure to act could potentially mean the end of the Austrian Empire as a Great Power, the loss of Germany’s most important ally, and the end of Germany’s hopes to become a leading world power.⁷⁰ A strong response would reinvigorate Austria, check the influence of Russia in the Balkans, and help to break the “iron ring” of the Triple Entente.⁷¹ The Kaiser thought Austria should act quickly, while she still had the sympathy of Europe.⁷²

But there was also an “interest” argument that Germany should not involve itself in the decision. The German Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, complained that there was always a German dilemma when Austria considered action in the Balkans, “If we urge them ahead, then they will say we pushed them in; if we dissuade them, then it will become a matter of our leaving them in the lurch. Then they will turn to the Western Powers, whose arms are wide open, and we will lose our last ally, such as it is.”⁷³ This same attitude was reflected emphatically by the Kaiser: “...it is purely

⁶⁸ Ibid., 202-3

⁶⁹ Ibid., 215

⁷⁰ Gordon A. Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 336

⁷¹ Schmitt and Vedeler, *The World in the Crucible*, 9

⁷² Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 221

⁷³ Craig, *Germany*, 335

Austria's affair to consider what to do in this matter, for it will be said afterwards, if things go wrong, that Germany was not willing!!”⁷⁴

The “blank check” policy can be seen as an attempt to walk a middle course between the somewhat conflicting interests described above. Germany could urge strong action by assuring its support to Austria, yet it could avoid responsibility by allowing Austria to determine exactly what action to take. Though this policy relinquished German control of the situation, the three most likely outcomes of Austrian action all appeared acceptable to Germany. First, war could be averted and Austria would gain a crucial diplomatic victory. Second, if diplomacy failed, it could result in a localized war that Austria would surely win. Third, the Triple Alliance could intervene, resulting in a general European war. The first two outcomes would secure Germany’s aims at little cost. The third would be costly, but the Kaiser believed it to be unlikely. Russia and France had yet to complete their military preparations and would be reluctant to chance war with Germany.⁷⁵ In addition, the Kaiser believed England would remain neutral.⁷⁶ This would make France and Russia even less likely to challenge Germany. Thus, the Kaiser had little reason to deny support to Austria.

Guaranteed of Germany’s support, Berchtold presented Serbia with such a highly inflammatory ultimatum that a general European war could scarcely be avoided.⁷⁷ Even so, Serbia did a masterful job of meeting Austria’s demands more than halfway. The impression in Europe was that a diplomatic solution would be forthcoming. According to Kaiser Wilhelm, Serbia’s response was, “A brilliant performance for a time-limit of only

⁷⁴ Ibid., 175

⁷⁵ Fritz Fischer, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), 54

⁷⁶ Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 493

⁷⁷ Ibid., 551

48 hours. This is more than one could have expected! A great moral success for Vienna.”⁷⁸ Even Berchtold called it “the most brilliant example of diplomatic skill which I have ever known.”⁷⁹ Austria, however, had already decided that any Serbian reply would be unsatisfactory and that diplomatic relations would be severed.

Analysis

Using Weinberger’s tests to evaluate The Kaiser’s decision to give Austria the “blank check,” we find that he complied with three of the criteria, did not comply with two, and that one was not applicable to the particular decision. The conflict between Austria and Serbia arguably represented one of Germany’s vital national interests (test one). The Kaiser was willing to use force to secure Germany’s interests (test two). There did exist reasonable assurance that the German public would support a war (test five). Finally Test four (continuous reassessment) was not a factor in the decision, because the test applies to the continuing use of force, rather than the initial decision to enter a conflict. Still, Germany’s later actions to forestall war showed that the Kaiser did believe in reassessing military decisions.

The Kaiser failed to communicate clear objectives concerning the use of German armed forces (test three). His intent was not to give Austria the motivation and backing it needed to start World War I; rather, it was to pose sufficient threat to keep Russian forces at bay in order to prevent the spread of a wider conflict. Only if the Triple Entente threw down the gauntlet first, was Germany ready to respond with force. Finally, reasonable diplomatic options had not been exhausted before the Kaiser gave Austria the “blank

⁷⁸ Ibid., 348

⁷⁹ Ibid., 340

check,” nor did the Kaiser have any assurance that Austria would even try to attain a diplomatic solution. He thus violated test six.

One thus concludes that Weinberger’s tests might have restrained the Kaiser from issuing the “blank check” to Austria. If he had been forced to communicate clear objectives regarding the use of German force, the Kaiser might have realized that his support for Austria was not unconditional: he expected Austria to behave responsibly. If he had been forced to consider whether all diplomatic options were exhausted, he might have realized that the “blank check” policy could be “cashed in” at any time. These two tests could have caused the Kaiser to adopt a different policy. He could have insisted that Germany be given a copy of the ultimatum before its presentation to Serbia. He could also have stated that German support was contingent upon Austria’s first attempting to find a diplomatic solution.

It is interesting that Germany, an autocracy, considered all the subjects covered by the Weinberger tests: they even considered public support for war. Weinberger had specifically stated that his tests were meant to provide guidance for democracies. This case indicates that the tests may have broader applicability than even Weinberger realized.

Although the preceding assessment may seem encouraging, this case also indicates that Weinberger may have omitted an important test: that decision-makers consider the long-term implications of their actions. Germany gave significant consideration to possible branches and sequels. Unfortunately, the Kaiser evidently failed to consider the possibility that Austria would behave rashly. Still, an analysis of

long-term implications seems a relevant and important part of the decision-making process.

United States Escalation in Vietnam - 15 December 1961

America's entry into the Vietnam War was so gradual that it was difficult to decide which decision to analyze. But, by assessing relevance to the present study and significance of the consequences, one is led to focus on the Kennedy administration. As rendered in the following excerpt from Ronald Goldberg's PhD dissertation:

Through 1965, four Presidents gradually escalated the United States' role in a vain attempt to settle the Vietnam problem. President Truman acted by bolstering French military power in the area. Eisenhower based his policy around the creation of an independent South Vietnam, presumably able to defend itself. Kennedy and Johnson substituted increasing amounts of American military power when the South Vietnamese proved unable to defend themselves.⁸⁰

Goldberg thus indicates that Kennedy was the first President to use substantial military force in Vietnam. Indeed, at his inauguration, there were fewer than one thousand advisors in Vietnam. At the time of his assassination, there were more than sixteen thousand American "advisers," many of whom participated in combat patrols with South Vietnamese units: additionally, there had been hundreds of American fatalities, and the United States had been an accomplice to the overthrow and assassination of Vietnam's president Ngo Dinh Diem.

The underlying causes of the Vietnam War were French colonialism, Vietnamese nationalism, and the environment of fear created by the cold war. Vietnam had been a French colony since the 1850s. To maintain its dominance in Vietnam, the French had, for a century, sought to keep the Vietnamese weak and incapable of performing the

functions of political administration and self-defense.⁸¹ In opposition to French rule, a charismatic leader named Ho Chi Minh formed the communist Vietminh political organization in 1940. Ho Chi Minh had “worked for more than two decades as a party functionary and revolutionary organizer in the Soviet Union, China, Thailand, and Vietnam.”⁸² When Japan drove the French out of Indochina in March of 1945, the Vietminh gathered an army of five thousand and began a resistance movement. Following the defeat of Japan in August, Ho Chi Minh occupied the government headquarters in Hanoi and declared independence for his country. France, however, was not yet ready to give up its former colony. French attempts to reassert control over Vietnam resulted in a bitter struggle known as the First Indochina War. In 1949, Ho Chi Minh began to receive support from Mao Zedong’s new communist government in China. Increasingly afraid it might lose the war, France began to appeal to Europe and the United States for greater assistance.

The American attitude toward Vietnam was largely a product of the cold war mentality. The United States interpreted the Indochina War not as a nationalist struggle against colonial domination, but rather as a conflict between communism and the West. In early 1952, Truman’s National Security Council articulated what became known as “domino theory”: that if any of the countries of Southeast Asia fell to communism, it could cause the others to fall as well.⁸³ There were practical interests as well: “Southeast Asia was the world’s largest producer of natural rubber and was an important source of oil, tin, tungsten, and other strategic commodities. Should control of these vital raw

⁸⁰ Ronald Allen Goldberg, *The Senate and Vietnam: A Study in Acquiescence* (Ann Arbor, Mich: University Microfilms, 1972), 180

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 5

materials suddenly change hands, the Soviet bloc would be enormously strengthened at the expense of the West.”⁸⁴

The Truman administration provided financial and military aid to assist France in dealing with the Vietminh insurgency - a policy that continued into the Eisenhower administration. The first Indochina War reached its denouement in 1954 at the village of Dienbienphu. Fifteen thousand French troops were surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered as France desperately appealed for U.S. help. The Eisenhower administration insisted upon two conditions. First, America would join combat only as part of a multinational coalition. Second, America would demand a greater role in determining strategy because, according to Eisenhower, the U.S. would be, “engaged to a point where we would want to have a success. We could not afford a defeat that would have world-wide repercussions.”⁸⁵ The administration believed that France was losing because it failed to wage the war aggressively.⁸⁶ Neither of the two conditions was met, so France received no additional combat support. Their subsequent shattering defeat at Dienbienphu led to a peace settlement at Geneva in April of 1954.

The Geneva Conference resulted in what was to be a temporary division of Vietnam at the seventeenth parallel. The French were left to guarantee South Vietnam’s sovereignty until 1956, when they would supervise elections to reunify Vietnam. The Eisenhower administration, wary that the Vietminh would easily win the upcoming election, began steadily to increase South Vietnamese aid in the form of money and

⁸³ McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 34

⁸⁴ George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1986), 13

⁸⁵ Ibid., 31

⁸⁶ Ibid., 32

advisors to help create a self-sustaining government. The new government, run by Ngo Dinh Diem, quickly lost its legitimacy among the South Vietnamese people.

Under Diem, the South Vietnamese government became a virtual dictatorship. Diem began to solidify his own power at the expense of democratic principles, refusing to hold the 1956 election called for by the Geneva accords. In the words of Admiral U.S. Grant Sharp, the Commander in Chief of Pacific Forces from the beginning of the Vietnam War until 1968:

Diem's political concepts severely hampered his effectiveness as a democratic leader. Despite the fact that he was a staunch Roman Catholic and had been exposed extensively to Western philosophies by both travel and education, he remained committed to the old, mandarin ways and to Vietnam's past. As a result, the political structure of his government was rigidly organized, overcentralized and dominated by Diem family members. In the long run, his personality combined with his political shortcomings to alienate the peasantry and, indeed, most of the rest of Vietnamese society, until, by late 1960, his regime rested chiefly on its own bureaucracy.⁸⁷

By 1959 the Vietcong, members of a communist South Vietnamese insurgency movement, had established themselves with the backing of North Vietnam. The Eisenhower administration, though aware of Diem's shortcomings, saw no alternative but to support him. A century of French rule had left Vietnam without competent indigenous political leaders.

This was the situation John F. Kennedy inherited when he took office in 1961. As a Senator, Kennedy had already declared his support for Vietnam, calling it: "...the cornerstone of the Free World in Southwest Asia, the keystone to the arch, the finger in the dike.... Vietnam represents a proving ground of democracy in Asia. The United States is directly responsible for this experiment.... We cannot afford to permit that

⁸⁷ Ulysses S. Grant Sharp, *Strategy for Defeat* (Novato, Calif: Presidio Press, 1978), 12-13

experiment to fail.”⁸⁸ Kennedy’s early setbacks in the White House also reinforced his desire to halt the spread of communism in Vietnam. Laos had fallen to the communists, the United States had been humiliated in its failed attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro at the Bay of Pigs, and Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev had made a speech pledging Soviet support for communist insurgents fighting wars of national liberation in countries of the developing world. All of these created the impression that the Kennedy administration was giving ground in the cold war.

In December 1961, Kennedy decided to reinforce South Vietnam after reviewing the recommendations of fact-finding mission led by General Maxwell Taylor. This was arguably Kennedy’s most important decision regarding that country. It represented the first time Kennedy’s attention was fully focused on Vietnam after the crises in Laos and Cuba had subsided. It resulted in the deployment of forces in numbers that exceeded the limits of the Geneva Conference. Finally, it represented Kennedy’s first clear-cut choice between escalation and withdrawal.”⁸⁹

Three events led to the Taylor mission. The first was a report by Brigadier General Edward Lansdale after a visit to Vietnam in January. He claimed that the Vietcong threat had increased and the American Embassy was alienated from Diem. He recommended some changes to improve American relations with Diem, at least until a more promising leader appeared. Second was a series of conversations Taylor had with Lieutenant General Lionel McGarr. McGarr estimated that Diem controlled around forty percent of South Vietnamese territory and that almost eighty-five percent of his military forces were immobilized by the insurgency. Furthermore, the terrain of South Vietnam

⁸⁸ Goldberg, *The Senate and Vietnam*, 108

⁸⁹ Herring, *America’s Longest War: The United States and Vietnam*, 82

made defense extraordinarily difficult: much more so than Malaya, where it had taken thirteen years to suppress an insurgency. The third event was a letter from Diem requesting additional American assistance. He wanted to increase his army from 170,000 to 270,000 in order to deal with the increased Vietcong threat.

Kennedy sent Taylor to Saigon with the following instructions, dated 13 October 1961:

...I would like your views on the courses of action, which our Government might take at this juncture to avoid a further deterioration in the situation in South Vietnam and eventually to contain and eliminate the threat to its independence.

In your assessment you should bear in mind that the initial responsibility for the effective maintenance of the independence of South Vietnam rests with the people and government of that country. Our efforts must be evaluated, and your recommendations formulated, with this fact in mind. While the military part of the problem is of great importance in South Vietnam, its political, social, and economic elements are equally significant, and I shall expect your appraisal and your recommendation to take full account of them.

Taylor believed the instructions were completely consistent with the National Security Action Memorandum (NASM) of May 11 that stated U.S. policy for Vietnam was “to prevent Communist domination of South Vietnam; to create in that country a viable and increasingly democratic society; and to initiate, on an accelerated basis, a series of mutually supporting actions to achieve this objective.”⁹⁰

At the time of Taylor’s visit, the government and people of Vietnam were completely demoralized. They were enduring the worst flood in decades. Diem had recently survived an assassination attempt, and rumors of a coup were circulating. He was becoming increasingly introverted and suspicious. He was losing the support of the South Vietnamese population, who was becoming increasingly loath to provide

⁹⁰ Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 224

information on the Vietcong. He tried to do everything himself and trusted no one but members of his own family. Indeed, there really were no additional leaders that Diem could bring in to augment his cabinet. Only a very small fraction of the population had educational, technical, or bureaucratic administrative skills. Diem, when he met with Taylor, spoke only of his military situation, as if the Vietcong were the sole source of his troubles. Militarily, Diem's intelligence network was almost nonexistent. His army was largely uneducated, poorly trained, and used in static defense. The Vietcong strength had increased from ten thousand in January 1961 to seventeen thousand in October. Taylor's group decided that, "pending the appearance on the scene of a more promising replacement, we should stick with Diem, hoping to effect improvement by persuasion, by example, and by a larger advisory presence to assist his government and armed forces."⁹¹

Taylor's report contained three sets of recommendations. The first was that Diem should enact political, governmental, and administrative reforms. The second was to provide aid and advisers for a counter guerrilla program including arms, specialized equipment, helicopters, pilots, and mechanics. In addition, the U.S. would send specialized Air Force squadrons of slow-flying B-26s and T-28s for the purpose of small-scale guerrilla warfare. The third recommendation was for ten thousand regular American ground troops to defend against a conventional attack by North Vietnam.⁹²

Kennedy and his advisers had several discussions over Taylor's report. All recommended that the United States should commit itself to Vietnam. The Joint Chiefs of Staff thought that Vietnam would fall without the introduction of significant American

⁹¹ Ibid., 236

⁹² Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 422

forces. They considered Taylor's recommendations too modest. If Hanoi or Peking chose to intervene, then the U.S. might need as many as six divisions. In Taylor's words:

they viewed my proposals as a useful first step but only that. But, since this first step might lead to a much deeper military involvement, before taking it the U.S. government should deliberately and thoughtfully decide whether or not it committed itself without reservation to preventing the fall of South Vietnam to Communism and, if so whether it was ready to pay whatever price that commitment might entail.⁹³

Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara recommended that the Pentagon prepare contingency plans should the United States have to introduce ground forces or initiate air strikes in the event of a large-scale North Vietnamese or Chinese intervention.

The President's decision was essentially to implement the recommendations of the Taylor report, with the exception of that pertaining to the commitment of combat ground troops.⁹⁴ Faced with the decision of withdrawing or positioning a significant American armed presence, he took a middle-of-the-road approach.⁹⁵ According to Roger Hilsman, "the President avoided a direct 'no' to the proposal for introducing troops to Vietnam. He merely let the decision slide, at the same time ordering the government to set in motion all the preparatory steps for introducing troops."⁹⁶ The decision was incorporated into a National Security Action Memorandum that summarized most of the points of discussion except for the clear Vietnam policy statement that the Joint Chiefs, Rusk and McNamara had recommended. According to Taylor, "Oddly, I do not recall that any particular importance was attached to the omission or that it aroused any

⁹³ Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 246

⁹⁴ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 424

⁹⁵ Herring, *America's Longest War*, 83

⁹⁶ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 424

particular discussion at the time.”⁹⁷ Diem reacted angrily to the demands for political reforms and to the limited nature of the American commitment. The Kennedy administration initially took a hard line, withholding shipments of aid, and quietly searching for a replacement for Diem. Eventually the two governments reached a compromise and settled on efficiency instead of reform. This was a face-saving way for America to back down and allow Diem to continue his current practices. In Kennedy’s words “Diem is Diem, and the best we’ve got.”⁹⁸

Analysis

Kennedy’s decision was at least questionable because it implemented a strategy that did not support national policy. According to the May NASM, the United States wanted to create a viable and increasingly democratic society in Vietnam. Taylor’s mission showed that the government was heading rapidly in the other direction. Diem was already isolated and suspicious, and he was becoming more so. The population was disgruntled and also becoming more so. The Vietcong insurgency was already strong, and it too was becoming more so. These problems could not be solved by American military aid alone. Radical political reform was also desperately needed in Vietnam, but the United States quickly dropped this issue when Diem refused to cooperate.

The decision-making process had four fundamental flaws. First, though Kennedy and his advisers discussed the question of vital interest, they did not question the underlying domino theory assumption, nor whether Vietnam would be the best domino to support. Second, the decision was biased. Kennedy’s letter of instructions to Taylor

⁹⁷ Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 248

⁹⁸ Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 85

indicated that the President had apparently already decided to reinforce Vietnam. According to Taylor, “I was not asked to review the objectives of this policy but the means being pursued for their attainment. The question was how to change a losing game and begin to win, not how to call it off.” Third, they did not keep their political aims in mind when they dropped the request for South Vietnamese reform. Fourth, though they addressed contingencies and decided to investigate the potential results of the proposed actions, they simply dropped the matter. The result was a shortsighted military solution that did not support Kennedy’s Vietnam policy.

Weinberger’s tests would likely not have alerted Kennedy to any of the four flaws in his decision-making process. First, there is no guidance in the tests to help the President determine whether a situation represents a vital interest (test one). Although there were individuals in the administration who made compelling arguments that Vietnam was not a vital interest (notably George Ball, the Undersecretary of State), the President decided that it was. Second, once the President determines a situation to be in the nation’s vital interest, a pro-action bias permeates all subsequent decisions: exactly what happened in the Taylor decision. It would be remarkable for a President to declare a situation to be a vital interest, then to be unwilling to do anything about it (test two). More likely, if the President were unwilling to take action, he would declare the situation to be outside America’s interests. Once having declared interest and willingness, the President can easily craft objectives (test three) to justify any amount of force he is willing to commit. Third, Weinberger did not require the military objectives to be consistent with the political aims: he merely required them to be clear. Fourth, Weinberger specified no requirement to examine the long-term implications of proposed

actions or to examine possible branches and sequels. Regarding the remaining tests, the Taylor decision represented exactly the kind of continuous reassessment recommended by test four. There was reasonable assurance of public and Congressional support (test five). Indeed, there existed a pro-action environment after the failures in Laos and Cuba. Finally, the United States had been diplomatically involved in Vietnam since the Truman administration; this certainly provided sufficient time to claim that Kennedy's modest use of force was a last resort (test six). Therefore, Weinberger's tests would not have been a barrier to Kennedy's escalation in Vietnam.

This case shows that the tests are not as restrictive as they might, at first glance, appear. Once the President reaches the point of considering the use of force, there is a "domino effect" connecting the first test to the second, third, and sixth tests. If the President decides that a situation represents a vital interest, he will probably be willing to use force and to create objectives to justify the amount of force he is prepared to use. He is also likely to claim that the proposed use of force represents the last resort or he wouldn't be considering military action in the first place. The requirement for continuous reassessment (test four) is no barrier because it governs the employment of force after the initial decision to engage. In effect, after the President declares a situation to be in the nation's vital interest, the only other restriction is the requirement for reasonable assurance of public support (test five).

One can thus conclude that Kennedy's Vietnam decision exposes three problems with Weinberger's tests. First, it shows the importance of reserving judgment until the end of the decision-making process. The first test's requirement to make a preliminary judgment about vital interest creates or enhances a detrimental bias that encourages

engagement before considering other critical aspects of the situation. Second, it exposes the requirement for military objectives to be consistent with, and to actually achieve the political aims. Third, as in the World War I study, it demonstrates that decision-makers should consider the long-term implications of their actions.

Operation Allied Force - 24 March 1999

After the Second World War, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) was reunited under Tito. It was comprised of six republics. Kosovo was not one of these six, but was a province of Serbia. However, Kosovo enjoyed special status as an autonomous region because of its Albanian majority. In 1974, Tito granted Kosovo the status of an autonomous province within Serbia with the same right as the other republics except the right to secede. This exception reflected fear that Kosovo would choose to secede and join Albania. Tens or even hundreds of thousands of Serbs left Kosovo during the 1970s and 1980s because of Albanian discrimination.⁹⁹ Within a year of Tito's death in 1980, riots broke out in Kosovo. Serbia wanted to reestablish control; and Kosovo wanted even more autonomy, some Albanians calling for secession or the creation of a "Greater Albania."

In 1987, Slobodon Milosovic was elected President of Serbia (and later, the FRY), riding a wave of nationalist sentiment amplified by the situation in Kosovo. In 1989 Milosovic returned Kosovo to its pre-1974 status. Many Albanians protested, and many of those who were state workers were fired from their jobs. After several years of nonviolent protest, The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was formed and began a

⁹⁹ James George Jetras, "NATO Myths and Bogus Justification for Intervention" in Ted Galen Carpenter, ed., *NATO's Empty Victory: A Postmortem of the Balkan War* (Washington: Cato Institute, 2000), 22

campaign of terrorism in 1993, using the classic guerilla strategy of converting a political struggle into a military confrontation. Serbia responded with brutal reprisals, and the violence continued to spiral. The situation erupted into a widespread insurrection in 1997.

In July 1998, NATO attempted to persuade Serbia to withdraw combat forces from Kosovo, finally threatening Milosovic with NATO air attacks. Serbian forces withdrew to the border as the KLA occupied half of Kosovo, removing dozens of Serbian inhabitants from their villages.¹⁰⁰ Three aspects are notable about the situation in the fall of 1998. First, the United States blamed Belgrade alone for the violence, even though the Clinton administration's Special Envoy to Kosovo, Robert Gelbard, had previously declared the KLA to be a terrorist group. Second, the KLA opposed the ceasefire because it did not contribute to its goal of independence. Third, the KLA used the ceasefire to reconstitute and increase its fighting power.¹⁰¹ The ceasefire shortly broke down. KLA forces continued their attacks throughout the winter, Serbia reintroduced armed forces into the area, and the spiral of violence continued.¹⁰²

On 6 February 1999, the United States and its Western allies met at Rambouillet, France in an attempt to gain a lasting peace agreement between Serbia and the Kosovo Albanians. The Rambouillet accord called for (1) withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo; (2) political autonomy for Kosovo; (3) a three-year waiting period, following which the situation in Kosovo would be reevaluated; (4) disarmament of the KLA; and

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 24

¹⁰¹ Christopher Lane, "Miscalculations and Blunders Lead to War" in Carpenter, ed., *NATO's Empty Victory*, 14

¹⁰² Ibid.

(5) NATO peacekeepers in Kosovo.¹⁰³ At first, neither side would sign. The KLA resisted because the agreement did not guarantee independence; and Belgrade demurred because the agreement stipulated that NATO forces would have unrestricted access not just to Kosovo, but also to the entire Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁴ To gain the KLA's assent, according to the New York Times, "Washington used NATO's threat to bomb Serbia as a carrot. U.S. officials reminded the KLA that, unless it signed the Rambouillet pact, the alliance would be unable to carry out its threat to bomb Serbia."¹⁰⁵ After the KLA signed and Serbia declined, the United States and NATO began a bombing campaign on March 24 to persuade the Yugoslavian government to accept the provisions of the Rambouillet accords.

The declared American interests were (1) ensuring the stability of Eastern Europe; (2) thwarting ethnic cleansing; and (3) ensuring NATO's credibility. The objectives of the bombing campaign were to (1) demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's opposition; (2) deter Milosevic from continuing and escalating his attacks; and (3) damage Serbia's ability to wage war.¹⁰⁶

Analysis

Allied Force shows that Weinberger's tests can operate backwards as well as forwards. Although Weinberger intended the President to start with the facts and work his way to an informed decision, there is nothing to prevent a President from starting with

¹⁰³ Ibid., 14-15

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 16-17

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 16

¹⁰⁶ Message From Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Henry H. Shelton, in *Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report Report To Congress*, n.p.31 January 2000

a decision and using the tests to “reinterpret” the facts to justify his actions to Congress, press, and public.

Our analysis is aided by politicians and military experts who openly debated the same broad subjects covered by Weinberger’s tests – the “why” and the “how” of the United States’ use of force in Kosovo. They were skeptical that the vital interests mentioned by NATO and the Clinton administration reflected the real reason behind the aerial campaign. Each of the three interests appeared insufficient to require military action.

First, if “thwarting ethnic cleansing” were a vital national interest, why was not the United States engaging elsewhere? According to Doug Bandow, a newspaper editorialist and former special assistant to the presidential in the Reagan administration:

Conflict wracks many other countries around the world. There have been mass murder in Burundi, Cambodia, Rwanda, Sudan, and Uganda; brutal insurgencies in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Sri Lanka; bloody wars between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and India and Pakistan; endless civil war in Afghanistan: violent separationist campaigns in Georgia (Abkhazies and Ossetians), Indonesia (East Timorese), Iraq (Kurds), Mexico (Chiapans), Northern Ireland (Irish Catholics), Russia (Chechens), Spain (Basques), and Turkey (Kurds); and strife for various reasons in Algeria, Burma, Guatemala, India, Moldova, Tajikistan, Tibet, and elsewhere.¹⁰⁷

Senator Sam Brownback asked Secretary Albright about the consistency of U.S. policy with regard to humanitarian issues and implied that it might be based in racism:

Senator BROWNBACk: Last year, we had 100,000 people killed in southern Sudan by a man-induced famine, and I ask, what is the difference between this and what is taking place in Kosovo and Serbia? You state that NATO is there, and it is not in Africa, for one, but still you had said earlier [in answer] to a question [that] we would be in Kosovo and Serbia even if it was not for NATO, that this is a U.S. decision to do this, and I do

¹⁰⁷ Doug Bandow, “NATO’s Hypocritical Humanitarianism” in Carpenter, ed., *NATO’s Empty Victory*, 33-34

not particularly see the differences here, other than one is in Africa, and the other is in Europe. I would hate to think that we simply do not deem one situation to be meritorious of our effort and we deem the other one not to be because of where it is located, or the ethnic mix of the people that are involved.

Secretary ALBRIGHT: I think, Senator, you have asked a very deep and troubling question, because as one asks it there is a tendency to think that we are choosing among different peoples for reasons that are not the reason, frankly. But I think that as you look at where there are terrible things going on in many parts of the world – and I think we try through whatever means we have to alleviate them where we can – the choices are not made on the basis of what kinds of people are there, or even the location, but on a combination of factors that would indicate that this is something that can be done by the application of American power, or other things that can be done by the support of America or some other method.¹⁰⁸

Albright's reply did not answer the question. She had previously eliminated NATO as the reason behind U.S. involvement. She also eliminated location as a factor, claiming that America would like to eliminate suffering wherever it occurred. But the question remained, given the obvious fact that the U.S. cannot engage everywhere, why pick Kosovo over the many other conflicts? She implied that the other conflicts simply could not be solved by the use of American force. However, she gave no reason why a limited bombing campaign could thwart ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and could not achieve the same result in Africa, for instance.

Second, if “ensuring the stability of Eastern Europe” were a vital interest and it, according to Albright, “directly affects the security of our Greek and Turkish allies to the south, and our new allies Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic to the north,” then why did the United States not involve itself in all Eastern European conflicts? Journalists have pointed out the hypocrisy of mentioning Turkey. In that country, according to Bandow:

a full-fledged guerrilla war has raged for 14 years as the Kurds have fought for self-determination (there is a similar conflict in Iraq, where Washington has imposed a no-fly zone to help protect Kurdish separatists.) ...The military has destroyed some 3,000 villages, using U.S. supplied tanks and planes. As many as 2 million people have been ethnically cleansed. Some 37,000 are estimated to have died in the conflict.

It is difficult to understand the American claim that it did not want the violence to spread to Turkey when one considers the fact that Turkey was already engaged in ethnic cleansing within its own borders.

Finally, “ensuring NATO’s credibility” was not (and is not) sufficient cause to wage war. The inference is that any peripheral interest automatically becomes a vital interest if NATO is involved because its credibility is at stake. According to Richard Haas’ book Intervention, examples like Vietnam and Lebanon “demonstrate that attempts to use the intervention as its own justification for continuing – the notion that previous sacrifices of blood and treasure necessitate soldiering on even in the absence of intrinsic interests worth more than the costs – will not succeed for long if at all.”¹⁰⁹

Just as the Senate committee questioned the interests behind U.S. involvement in Kosovo, they were also skeptical of the objectives. They did not believe that the chosen application of force was leading to the political ends sought:

Senator THOMAS: President Clinton said the mission was to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO’s purpose so that Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course. Obviously, that has not been done. To deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo. That has not been done. If necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military capacity to harm the people of Kosovo. How much have we done on that, in terms of damage? ...I think the point is that if those indeed were the missions, and if you measure them now, and they have not been accomplished, then is it not necessary to alter that mission, or to change

¹⁰⁸ Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 20 April, 28 September, and 6 October, 1999 (Washington: U.S Government Printing Office, 2000), 34

¹⁰⁹ Richard N. Haas, *Intervention: The Use of Force in the Post-Cold War World* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 1994), 72-73

what we are doing to accomplish the mission?

Secretary ALBRIGHT: Well, we believe that the air campaign is accomplishing a great deal of the mission. As I stated earlier, the kinds of damage that has already been done through I think excellent bombing sorties – where the various headquarters and command and control have been destroyed, where ammunition has been destroyed, fuel storage facilities have been destroyed, airfields, his airplanes, armored personnel carriers, and tanks have been destroyed. It is my sense from reading the battle damage assessment that systematically we are degrading seriously his military machine.¹¹⁰

Albright's answer demonstrated exactly the kind of statistics-oriented, target-servicing mindset that proved so damaging in Vietnam – a mindset the U.S. armed forces have been trying very hard to eliminate. Taken together, the objectives for Allied Force make a mockery of the art of strategy. They are a one-size-fits-all set of guidelines: the strategic equivalent of a form letter.

Despite the troubling aspects of the preceding analysis, Weinberger's tests appear to have been satisfied. The Clinton administration did present three interests that it believed were sufficiently vital to justify force. It was willing to use force. It did publish clear objectives. Allied Force did represent a reassessment of the situation after the threatened bombing of the previous fall. There was no indication that reasonable assurance of public support would be lacking. Finally, the administration could point to the ceasefire agreement of July 1998, to the Rambouillet Accords of February 1999, and to a stream of almost continuous warnings to Milosevic as evidence that it used force only as a last resort.

¹¹⁰ Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 24

The evidence also shows that the tests appear to have been applied in reverse fashion. If the first test had been applied forward, then the interests that resulted in Allied Force would also have led the administration to consider bombing Turkey. It appears more likely that the first test was run backward: that the administration decided to bomb Serbia, and then crafted interests to justify its intentions. Similarly, if the third test had been applied forward, then the Clinton administration would have selected specific and measurable objectives to affect the situation on the ground in Kosovo. However, any objective that is specific and measurable enough to define success will also define failure. Therefore, it appears that the Clinton administration used a reverse process: defining its objectives in terms of the efforts to be made instead of the results to be achieved.

This exposes an enormous problem with Weinberger's tests: each subject is treated as an independent variable. Each test can be answered or manipulated by the decision-maker without considering or affecting the other tests. Therefore, when a President contemplates an issue using Weinberger's criteria, he can employ whatever "body English" is required to get almost any result he chooses.

Allied Force thus exposes three problems in Weinberger's tests. First, the tests, as a whole, permit deliberate manipulation. Second, the third test creates a danger of protracted conflict because it does not constrain decision-makers to select military objectives that will secure America's interests. Third, the lack of any requirement to consider the long-term implications of their actions also increases the danger of protracted conflict.

Chapter Summary

On the positive side, the World War I case indicates that Weinberger's tests are useful. They might have inhibited the Kaiser from issuing the 'blank check' to Austria, perhaps delaying or preventing the war. The case also shows that Weinberger's tests might be applicable to forms of government other than democracies.

On the negative side, Vietnam and Allied Force both indicate that the tests are not very useful. The Vietnam study shows that the first test, with its requirement to make a preliminary conclusion about national interest, can introduce a detrimental bias into the rest of the decision-making process. Allied Force shows that the tests not only allow bias, but also deliberate manipulation. Both Vietnam and Allied Force show that the third test is insufficiently restrictive: it allows leaders to select objectives that are inconsistent with America's interests. Finally, all three case studies show that the tests should contain a requirement for leaders to consider the long-term effects of their decisions.

There are two reasons why the tests appear useful when applied to World War I, and not useful when applied to Vietnam and Allied Force. First, the Kaiser was biased to avoid the use of military force. Therefore, the capacity of the tests to urge restraint was untested. Second, the subjects covered by the tests are indeed relevant. The criticism concerns their arrangement, relative weighting, and the omission of other relevant subjects. Thus the tests can alert decision-makers to factors they might have overlooked.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter encompasses three main subjects. First, the tests will be assessed one by one, summarizing the main findings of the theorists and cases. Second, the major omissions will be noted, i.e., those criteria that Weinberger did not include, but which the theorists and cases indicate should be incorporated. Finally, the overall conclusion will be stated in answer to the thesis question, “what is the strategic utility of the Weinberger Doctrine?”

Weinberger’s test about vital interest has three major problems. First, interest is not the only reason for a state to consider the use of force. Thucydides adds fear and honor to interest, while Allison adds Model II organizational motives and Model III political motives to the rational interests of Model I. Second, none of the theorists advocated measuring the strength of the interest with respect to an absolute yardstick. Thucydides spoke against such an idea and recommended instead that the strength of the motivation be compared to the feasibility and size of the effort required. Third, the Vietnam and Allied Force case studies show that the first test has too much power. Once the decision-maker has declared a situation to represent a vital interest, there appears to be an almost overwhelming urge to do something: an urge that biases or overpowers the rest of the tests.

The second test about intent to win and willingness to commit sufficient forces has two major problems. First, it is out of sequence among the other tests. Thucydides and Clausewitz taught that force size is largely determined by the nature of the

objectives. The objectives, however, have yet to be articulated until the third test. Not only is it premature to consider force size before objectives, but Thucydidean logic also requires that the question of willingness should be addressed last: after making a measured judgment of all other factors. The second problem is that the test combines two subjects that should be considered separately. According to Clausewitz, scaling forces to meet objectives is a military problem and could, therefore, (perhaps better) be solved for the leader by lower-level advisers. Willingness and intent, however, are subjective judgments that should be reserved for the decision-maker. Vietnam showed the danger of mixing the two subjects. There, Kennedy committed force with too much regard for willingness and too little regard for objectives and consistent strategy.

Vietnam and Allied Force show that the third test should require objectives to be more than merely clear. According to Clausewitz and Thucydides, objectives should depend on the interests the state wishes to secure. If a decision-maker is free to choose objectives that he believes will be easy to perform, instead of selecting objectives that will positively secure America's interests, then it could set the stage for a prolonged conflict of indeterminate outcome.

The fourth test concerning continuous assessments is not really a test at all. Instead, it is a reminder to use the rest of the tests to reevaluate existing conflicts as the situation changes. None of the theorists or case studies disputed the need for reevaluation. However, Clausewitz and Thucydides cautioned leaders that a temporary setback might provide a powerful impetus to change strategies. Decision-makers should ensure that any change in strategy is a sound response to a changed situation, instead of a hasty reaction to a loss of nerve.

The fifth test requiring assurance of public support is not recommended by any of the theorists (especially Thucydides). All predicted that public support would be variable and that the people might not be able to select the course of action that is best for the state. However, all the theorists indicated that even if public support is not a requirement, it is still a consideration, particularly if the conflict will be lengthy. In all the case studies, public support was either pro-war or generally neutral at the start of the conflict.

The sixth test allowing force only as a last resort is also not endorsed by any of the theorist. This test is also not as much a requirement as a consideration. Thucydides had no problem with the early use of force if that appeared the only way to secure the state's interests. However, if two strategies were feasible, then he recommended the less violent of the two. Clausewitz also believed that the appropriateness of force depended on the situation, and cautioned leaders against holding an ornamental rapier against an enemy's sharp sword.

There is also an important criterion missing from Weinberger's. Thucydides, Clausewitz, and all three case studies show the importance of considering the long-term implications of any proposed use of force. What if force is used to threaten, and the threat fails, what then? What if limited action fails to secure the national interests? Leaders must not only consider, but also answer, such questions before committing to action.

Finally, all three theorists and all three case studies indicate that the tests lack proper structure. To consider the elements of strategy does not mean that one has considered strategy. Weinberger has identified most of the correct subjects but has failed to establish the necessary framework required connecting them into a coherent strategy.

Criteria that Weinberger expressed as independent variables are actually highly dependent variables in the equation of strategy: objectives depend on the interests America wishes to secure; the size of military forces depends on the objectives sought; finally, willingness to use force should depend on the balance between the size of military effort required and the importance of the interest. Unfortunately, the way Weinberger articulated his tests causes the decision-maker to examine the pieces of the puzzle instead of the way the pieces fit together into coherent picture.

The overall conclusion is that Weinberger's tests are not useful in the way that Weinberger intended: to provide guidance to Presidents who might otherwise use force unwisely, and to urge restraint. Weinberger's treatment of each test as an independent variable ignores the constraints imposed by strategy and weakens the tests' capacity to urge restraint. Thus weakened, the relatively stronger first test can more easily overpower the remaining five.

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